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Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* United Nations says Croatian Government and Krajina Serbs have mobilized up to 100,000 and 50,000 troops respectively.

* Special Coordinator for Sarajevo reports progress in talks on restoration of utilities.

* United Nations releases "The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics" for Fourth World Conference on Women.

* Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council sets August 13 as date for partial re-run of national elections; UNMIH says overall situation is secure and stable.

* Assembly of International Seabed Authority to hold third part of first session in Kingston from 7 to 18 August.

* UNHCR and World Scout Organization to sign memorandum of understanding on assisting refugees.

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The United Nations today estimated that the Croatian Government had fully mobilized as many as 100,000 troops, while the Krajina Serbs had mobilized up to 50,000 troops, following the recent escalation of tension in the region. Talks between the parties were scheduled to begin in Geneva tomorrow morning under the chairmanship of mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Meanwhile in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there was some fighting on the northern confrontation line of the Bihac pocket today. Bosnian Government troops were thought to be trying to retake lost ground. Zepa and Gorazde remained quiet, while the number of firing incidents in Sarajevo declined to 900 yesterday.

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The Special Coordinator for Sarajevo, William Eagleton, today reported progress in negotiations with the Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Serbs regarding the restoration of gas supplies to the city. The Government today reopened a valve in the section of the gas pipeline running through its territory, and the Serbs were expected to do likewise tomorrow.

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The United Nations today released "The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics", an official report for next month's Fourth World Conference on Women. It shows that women have made significant progress in some areas since the First World Conference on Women in 1975, but highlights the need for greater efforts to achieve social, political and economic equality between the sexes.

The "World's Women 1995" focuses on country data and regional averages with a view to shaping national policies. It reflects the shift in development strategies from looking at women in isolation to looking at them in relation to men. The report covers the core areas of population and families, education, health, child-bearing, work and public life. It also deals with such topics as the media, violence against women, poverty, the environment, refugees and displaced persons, and women's participation in the United Nations.

Introducing the report at Headquarters, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Carol Bellamy, said it provided ammunition in the struggle for full equality and for the empowerment of the world's women. The report revealed the progress made in that regard, but also highlighted many problem areas. She noted that the rate of HIV infection was increasing faster among women than among men; that 75 percent of women in southern Asia were illiterate; and that female genital mutilation still occurred in many African and in some Asian countries.

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Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council has now set August 13 as the date for the partial re-run of the first round of national elections. Printed ballots have already arrived in Port-au-Prince and distribution will start tomorrow. The United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) described the overall situation in the country as "secure and stable".

(more)

In another development, a third class of cadets will graduate from Haiti's Police Academy within days, after a four-month training programme conducted by personnel from Canada, France and the United States. This will bring the number of new Haitian National Police to over 1,000. As they are deployed the Haitian Interim Police are being phased out.

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The Assembly of the International Seabed Authority will hold the third part of its first session in Kingston, Jamacia, from 7 to 18 August. It is expected to focus on the composition of, and elections to, the Council of the Authority. It will also deal with the election of members of the Finance Committee and the Legal and Technical Commission; receive the final report of the Preparatory Commission for the Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea; and consider the organization of the secretariat.

The first part of the session, which began in Kingston in November 1994, was devoted to the commemoration of the establishment of the International Seabed Authority. The Assembly began its substantive work during the second part of the session, which was held from 27 February to 17 March.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Organization of the Scout Movement will sign a memorandum of understanding tomorrow aimed at assisting refugees. The signing will take place at the World Scout Jamboree in Dronten, Netherlands. The memorandum will strengthen the relationship between the UNHCR and millions of Scouts worldwide, some of whom are currently helping refugees through innovative projects. The agency is already working with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

Scouts and Guides can help refugees by identifying unaccompanied children, assisting in refugee registration, conducting literacy courses and organizing recreational activities. They also invite refugee children to camps and provide them with "Peace Packs" -- boxes of school supplies and personal items.

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